

Diane Shelby
411 T ST NW
Washington DC 2001

Case 20290 – BZA

My name is Diane Shelby – I am a retired senior foreign service officer and attorney. My family and I have lived at 411 T ST NW since 1995. Since then, my family and I have taken great pride in living in this historic African American heritage community, and have watched the ongoing gentrification of LeDroit Park. Over the years, I have continually been inspired by how the community has come together to ensure that LeDroit Park can be a safe and inviting place for all residents to enjoy, as I have done.

My property sits on the same long and narrow alley that abuts the rear of 421 T St NW. I recently learned that the house had been sold to a developer who intends to turn the single-family home into a 27-bedroom apartment building (!!) The proposed conversion would not only adversely impact the enjoyment of my home, but I believe it will set a dangerous precedent for the entire community. I was also surprised to learn that hearings are being held virtually, which makes it difficult for many residents, including myself, to participate.

I am a disabled senior and use the alley behind my home to bring groceries into my home and for contractors making repairs on my home to access as well. The alley will terminate at the site of the large new building that is envisioned at 421 T ST NW. The new building will more than double the density on the block, and I fear that it would likely make the alley unusable to me and my family. Currently, to turn at the end of the alley, one has to make a 7 point turn so as not to hit any abutting properties. Imagine if the traffic on the alley were to double! It would render the alley unusable, even for residents like me who have difficulty walking up the front steps to my home.

I also grow vegetables in my backyard, which I have been able to do successfully for many years. As you might know, trash trucks, constructions trucks – all manner of trucks are unable to go down the alley, as it is very narrow. To think that the developer’s trash plan would have a private trash company come down the alley by backing into it is simply infeasible. The idea that dumpsters large enough to accommodate a structure with 27 bedrooms would now sit in the alley, bringing with it multiple pests, and without a realistic

plan to remove the trash is unfathomable. These plans are contrary to the historic, single-family zoned block I thought I moved into 25 years ago.

I understand that the regulations allowing conversions of single-family homes to multi-family dwellings were recently amended and (perhaps inadvertently) removed protections to adjacent homes' "light, air, privacy, character, scale, and pattern". Given that the building would overshadow my backyard as well as all the homes along the row, I deeply worry about the loss of privacy that this would create. I believe that allowing this conversion would be a mistake, and I urge the Zoning Commission and Adjustment Board to review the proposed structure with these protections to adjacent homeowners in mind. We are all currently suffering amid a global health emergency – to think that the safety and enjoyment of our homes will be further compromised by the proposed development is ~~almost too much to bear.~~

truly pisses me off !!

Best regards,

Diane W. Shelby

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+1 (202) 360-5483